1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
AW50 Badaga AW50

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BADAGA GIRLS.

[Facing p. 75]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

175 to spit in the proper place.' With this attitude prevalent, the spread
[514] of various viruses and of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* has been greatly curtailed. The regular washing of the body and shaving of
[515] pubic hair have also contributed to health by restricting the
(302) incidence of bodily fungi and lice-borne diseases.

The ecological significance of these various beliefs and practices
175 is that as the Nilgiri population increased in the nineteenth century and some village streams began to be polluted by this new
161 pressure, the Badagas managed to avoid some contamination by switching from drinking stream water and fresh milk to tea, coffee
[318] and sometimes alcohol, all of which would be relatively free of bacterial organisms. The new balance with the environment that this change brought about was certainly one factor in the remarkable increase in the Badaga population since the advent of the British (Appendix 2).

175 At the same time that this change in drinking habits was occurring their eating habits were undergoing an equally radical
177 transformation. In part this was due to the several dozen types of
262 fruit, grain and vegetable introduced from Europe by British settlers and adopted by most Badagas. The variety of their diet was thus greatly increased.

VILLAGE NAMES

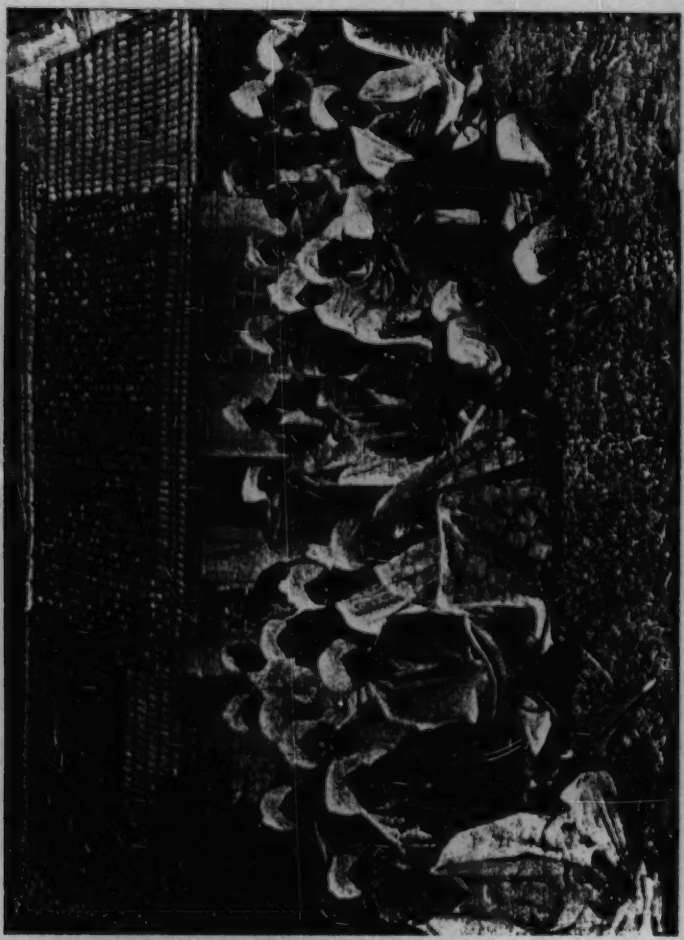
121 A study of the present Badaga hamlet names yields a body of insights about the early settlements formed during the two and a half centuries preceding the first British report (Keys, 1812).

Perhaps a somewhat lyrical description of the Nilgiri Plateau may at this point aid the reader's understanding of what is to follow:

133 The plateau is a true tableland, its average height being very uniform. But there is not a square mile of level ground in the whole of it, its surface being broken by endless undulations which in places swell into considerable and distinct ranges. It rises most abruptly from the plains below it; and on the west, above the Ouchterlony Valley and southwards, its sides are often sheer, bare walls, hundreds of feet in height and too steep even for trees to obtain a footing on them. Elsewhere dense forest covers almost the whole of its slopes . . .

It is first of all divided east and west into two fairly equal but

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50



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PL. 12

[Following p. 248-L]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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Pl. 3

[following p. 248-C]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Pl. 4

[following p. 248-D]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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Pl. 5

[following p. 248-E]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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Pl. 6

[following p. 248-F]

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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Pl. 10

[following p 248-J]

Plate Section

361 Plate 1 A typical Badaga hamlet (Dimbaṭṭi), above the valley floor but sheltered by a hill from the south-west monsoons. Note the strips of land running downhill. The well in the foreground is new.

342 Plate 2 Typical work-space (ke:ri) in front of houses in Ka:ṯe:ri. The two-story house is a twentieth-century innovation. The poles carry electricity to most houses.

291 Plate 3 A Toda couple, both wearing embroidered shawls (pu:txuḏy).

301 643 Plate 4 Pāda Rāja Gowder, paramount chief of the Badagas since 1956, and headman of Tu:ne:ri. His gold earrings are of a traditional design.

302 877 Plate 5 Two schoolgirls carrying their lunch, O:ranaṛi hamlet. Both have an auspicious mark on the brow.

Plate 6 Sithamma, grandmother of the girls in Plate 5; she lived in O:ranayi, was a traditional Lingayat, and a noted herbal therapist. Her gold ornaments are traditional.

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Plate 7 Kumba:ras in Kempola hamlet, here enshrouded in mist.

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Plate 8 Kotas from Kolmel playing for Lingayats dancing during a funeral at the neighbouring hamlet of O:ranayi, 1963. Women do not dance in public.

777 764 Plate 9 Cattle threshing grain on a work-space in O:ranayi. The hired labourers are non-Badagas.

243 231 Plate 10 Women's work-group outside a house in Ki:ɣkunda village. All wear sarees in place of the traditional dress.

496 291 Plate 11 The Goddess Hette with bell, a wreathed *linga*, and a tray with plantain and half-coconut offerings, decorating a Lingayat temple in Ka:ṯe:ri.

778 782 Plate 12 Council of elders at Ke:ti village. The commune headman is on the extreme left, in white.

[p. 25]

623 632

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

after a few hours. This seemingly trivial belief had a hygienic importance, for it meant that fresh milk would be used quickly and not kept, lest the tabu about boiling be violated. If milk were allowed to "boil up" (i.e., curdle) *of its own accord*, this was taken as an omen of imminent danger or death for the household, and thus a very serious matter indeed.

The effect upon Badaga health of the changes in drinking habits outlined above was reinforced by other cultural practices, specifically in regard to buffalo dung and spitting. Various maps of Badaga villages made in the first half of the nineteenth century show that several stone kraals were located just outside each village. This means that the fecal matter of buffalo herds was confined to a certain place; (I have myself seen dung over a foot deep in some kraals). Unsavoury though these places must have been, they ensured that the dung was not spread throughout the habitation area of each village, and this substantially reduced "the chance of transference of enzootic and epizootic diseases to man" (Alland 1970: 56). As the value of farmland for tea and potato cultivation grew, especially during the present century, the Badaga population increased dramatically but the size of the cattle herds dwindled. The present-day situation is therefore that Badaga population density is vastly higher than it was, but the risks of cattle-borne infection are proportionately much less because the lack of grazing has forced them to make heavy reductions in the size of their herds and abandon many of the kraals.

As we shall see below (2.11), indiscriminate spitting was not allowed in and near the home or temple. Spittoons were used inside the house; and a proverb stressed that, "If you ask for an obligation it is essential to see the right people: it is essential to spit in the proper place." With this attitude prevalent, the spread of various viruses and of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* has been greatly curtailed. The regular washing of the body and shaving of pubic hair described below (2.9, 2.13) have also contributed to health by restricting the incidence of bodily fungi and lice-borne diseases (Alland 1970: 58). In nearly all villages the houses are built in parallel lines with solid stone or brick walls partitioning each house from its neighbours. In Ke:ti, a typical village in this respect, it was found that on the average each row of houses was separated from those in front and behind it by a distance of 10 meters, which was mostly the span of the courtyards. This relative lack of crowding of living space has

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 13]

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

there. (The Todas are the only group in this region who habitually wipe the rectum with green leaves.)

2.11. The nose is cleaned by holding it between the index finger and thumb of the left hand, and blowing the mucus onto the ground. With babies, a relative sucks the nose and then spits the mucus out.

No one should spit on the floor of the house or blow his nose there. Well-mannered people do not spit on the yard outside either, but might instead spit on the grass of the village green provided nobody else was nearby. Furthermore, people do not spit in a temple out of respect for the god; nor on a funeral ground. Two types of spittoons, nowadays of brass, are kept in the house: a *kuplike* for men and an *uggu kiṇḍi* for men and old women. The latter vessel must be kept in the outer room, and although men do use the vessel they will not touch it. The men's spittoon, *kuplike*, must not be used by women, but may be carried into the inner, more sacred room of the house.

Spitting is an act that normally accompanies the chewing of tobacco. It is charged with a good deal of social significance. Thus if a woman spits on the ground near an enemy, this means: "I don't like you — go away!" A man will spit at an enemy when abusing him, but if he otherwise spits in someone's direction it means he is going to fight with that person. If during a ceremony a boy is staring at a girl in the crowd, she either opens her mouth to show that she will accept his advances, or spits on the ground to show she does not. Until the nineteenth century one of the severest punishments for a woman was to make her drink water from an earthen spittoon in public.

2.12. Badagas clean the teeth by rubbing them with charcoal and then rinsing the mouth. Those who have settled in the Waina:ḍ (the Waina:ḍ Gaudas) make a black powder for cleaning the teeth, by frying up the husks of grain with salt. A proverb wisely admonishes that, "The teeth are spoiled by not picking with a stick."

2.13. In early days Badaga women rubbed butter into their hair and bodies (as Toda women still do); but they used no scents. In those times women had no hair brushes, and so they would take the prickly seed pod of the thorn-apple, dry it out, and use it instead. Now hairbrushes are universally used.

Women regularly remove their armpit and pubic hair nowadays, with the help of a special soap sold in the market which causes the

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

hair to fall out. Some young girls use razors instead of this. The traditional method, still followed by some old women, is to rub wood ash into the pubes for one or two minutes and then pull each hair out separately. There was a wild plant that was dried for a few years, then burnt; and its ashes caused the hair to fall out as they were rubbed onto the body. The reason for removing the hair is that it can harbour ticks.

Before contact with the British, Badaga men shaved with the help of knives made by the Kotas. A potful of water served as a mirror. Later they began to shave themselves with broken bottle glass; and now razors can be bought in the bazaar. There are no professional barbers among the Badagas; but friends do sometimes shave each other. Poor men might shave rich men (but not *vice versa*), for which service they would receive some grain. A great indignity for the very poorest was to shave the pubes of other men for remuneration. Even today one may hear a person being abused with the words, "What can you do? You can't even shave my pubes!" Men regularly remove this hair for the same reason that women do.

Today Badaga men patronize barbers in the towns, but among elders one may still occasionally see the traditional haircut. The hair on top of the head should grow long, and this lock is then tied in a bun (*kotti*) at the back of the head. The sides are cropped short. A moustache gives dignity, and should only be shaved off for the funeral of a very close relative. Priests and headmen should not shave at all. Other matters of hygiene are discussed in the following chapter.

Clothing and Adornment[2]

2.14. It is generally said that before they left Mysore the Badaga women wore *sa:ris* — several meters of cloth draped around the body — and men wore *do:tis* — shorter lengths wrapped around them as loincloths. These at least are the traditional clothes of men and women in the Indian plains, now worn with such extras as blouses, shirts, underwear and shoes. But only in the twentieth century have the Badagas reverted to this plainsman style of dress, and that in combination with certain European influences too.

According to legend the later settlers fled to the Hills in the seven-

[2]Sections 2.14-2.17 are adapted from my longer article, "Badaga Apparel: Protection and Symbol," in *The Fabrics of Culture* (ed. Justine M. Cordwell and Ronald A. Schwarz), pp. 143-174. See bibliography for details.

4 BIRTH PRACTICES

"Delivery is like having escaped death."
(Proverb)

Pregnancy

4.1. Generally a Badaga woman menstruates each 25 to 30 days. If this does not happen at the usual time she is taken to some knowledgeable old woman on the fortieth day after the last menses. She will know by the state of the breast if a person is pregnant: the main indicator is the nipple, which becomes darker. The breasts become shinier and slightly bigger. Other signs of pregnancy are that a woman feels lazy about working, even about walking or speaking, and she either does not want to eat or wants unusual kinds of food. She wants extra chilies, but must not have them. She always has a sensation of nausea, and especially when she eats. By such indicators it is known that the woman is pregnant. These signs continue until the sixtieth day only. By the end of the second month a woman can be quite sure that she is pregnant. (843) (841)

There is a kind of pregnancy without any preceding menstruation, considered a god-given pregnancy. This is quite common shortly after a birth. A woman does not start menstruating until five or six months after a birth, but if she has meanwhile had coitus she may become pregnant again. In one village a girl was reported to have got pregnant before ever menstruating. She was aged about 15, and was otherwise a big, mature girl. (There are no stories of virgin births among the Badagas, however.) (841)

4.2. Once a man knows his wife is pregnant he should grow his bread and moustache from then until her seventh month of pregnancy. (302)

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Thurston (1909). We will simply offer a listing of what the ceremonies are, in chronological order, and will also describe those nonceremonial childhood events which alter the surface of the human body in some way, and hence are of some relevance to an account of Badaga health and illness.

(*a*) *Birth*. The only ceremonial aspect at delivery is a magical act to ward off any evil influence. It is described in detail above (4.11).

(*b*) *Naming*. This important ceremony makes the child into a social being, and must be performed before the fortieth day of life. Should it die before the ceremony the child's corpse is buried without a formal funeral (Jagor 1876: 199; Thurston 1909: 110).

(*c*) *Head Shaving*. This is usually combined with the ear boring, and should occur within about a year of the child's birth, but after the naming ceremony. The shaving is now done with a razor but formerly used a fragment of bottle glass (Thurston 1909: 110). Children should have a second complete shave at any time from two weeks to a year afterwards, but with no further ceremony, before their hair is allowed to grow long.

(*d*) *Ear Boring*. Sometimes this used to be combined with the naming ceremony (Jagor 1876: 199), but otherwise it occurs during a child's first year. It should follow the shaving. An earring is simply touched to the child's ear, but several years later the lobes will be punctured without any further ceremony, using the point of an earring for this (Rhiem 1900: 503).

(*e*) *First Tooth Ceremony*. Generally all babies get their lower teeth first, but in the case of a boy there will be a small ceremony if he gets teeth in the *upper* jaw first.

(*f*) *School*. There is no ceremony for when a child starts school, but the parents select an auspicious day for this and distribute sweets to the new classmates.

(*g*) *Nostril Piercing*. This is done in a girl's ninth, eleventh or thirteenth year on an auspicious day, but without any ceremony. In earlier times it was essential for a girl to have a nose-ring before she got married. Since about 1955 the practice has stopped altogether, and before that it was often combined with a girl's tattooing.

(*h*) *Tattooing*. Today the tattooing of girls is going out of fashion, and few of the younger women are so marked. A century ago however all women were tattooed on the forehead, and Jagor illustrates

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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representing 108 protective spells that had been said while it was being made, was put round the neck of a Badaga infant to protect him from all sorts of evil and illness. Nowadays a talisman is often worn instead. It consists of a tiny sheet of copper on which a magical symbol has been engraved, placed inside a silver cover, and tied round a child's neck after a hen or goat has been sacrificed. Both of these items were made by non-Badagas living in the Coimbatore Plain. Different kinds of talisman ward off illness, possession by ghosts, "bad winds," barrenness, failure in trading, or failure in courtship. Today a talisman is only bought after a child (or occasionally an adult) has been sick, to ward off a recurrence of that illness. In the last century children's talismans were reportedly "kneaded from earth and ashes taken from funeral pyres" (Reclus 1885: 232).

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THERMAL BURNS: DRY (*benda hunnu*)

5.24. Children sometimes have pus-filled swellings and rashes on the skin caused not by maladies so much as by earlier treatments. Thus one small boy reportedly had such wounds on the forehead, two over the nipples, two over the navel, two more to the right and left of it, and one on the abdomen, all caused by burning with the rhizome of the sweet flag. Girls often had slime smeared on their festering new tattoo wounds (Jagor 1876: 196; cf. 7.9).

[752]

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LEUKODERMA (*sullu*)

5.25. Albinoism occurs because the body is "overheated." Albinos generally die in infancy, but some "ripen" till they attain the colour of their parents. The disease appears after birth, it is said, and affects either some parts or the entire body. Today only certain Kurumbas still know the plants necessary for a herbal cure, although Badagas once knew them too.

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ALOPECIA AREATA (*tare maṇḍe*)

5.26. If a newborn child has scant hair or patchiness on the head, it is shaved half-a-dozen times, and then the head-shaving ceremony is held at an unusually early age. If this does not

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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improve the hair, two other procedures can be followed. Either the hair is washed, using the bark of *toreko:lu* for soap; or else some tiny buds of common bracken are ground up till they form an oily paste. This is used as a shampoo for some days when washing the baby's head.

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A disease that occurs among youngsters causes patchy baldness, as clumps of hair fall out. It is said that "insects" are eating at it and so they must be killed. A biece of hard, hairy bezoar stone, called "hair-diamond," is bought in a bazaar. It is dipped in milk and then rubbed onto the bald patch repeatedly until it bleeds. Then "the insects inside die," I was told.

ORTHODONTICS 856

5.27. "It is bad if a tooth sticks out; it is bad if a river passes beyond the river bank." Thus if a child's tooth is not growing in the right direction an older woman of the household soon tries to bend it into position. She works at this every morning after the child wakes up, and before he eats, for one or two weeks. There are two procedures: either the child sits by the fire and the tooth is held in a cloth that has been heated over the fire; or else the cloth is dipped in very cold water before use. *Ma:dua*, a mouth disease common among children, is described later (6.39).

(164)

TONSILITIS (*tonde kaɬalu*) 752 826

5.28. In earlier days some therapists grew the nails of the left thumb and index finger for use in tonsilectomy. Tonsils were taken out after they ached or swelled so much that the child could not eat. Someone pressed the back of the tongue down with a cooking skillet, so that the child could not close his mouth, while others held his head and arms to keep him still. The therapist put her thumb and index finger down the throat and pinched the tonsils off with her long sharpened nails. (They could be thrown away anywhere.) A pancake made of fresh finger millet was then prepared and kept aside until it was cool and dry. Then it was cut into small pieces and these were

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4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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Badaga girls, (ca. 1900)

[p. 120-B]

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

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Badaga schoolgirls (1963)

[p. 120-C]

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
AW50 Badaga AW50

house every day, and all the girls of the village assemble there, cook and eat together. On the morning of the next full-moon day she bathes, receives again a new cloth from her parents and sits outside the house till the hour when the moon rises in the evening. When she sees the moon appear above the horizon she enters her house. Five old females accompany her and conduct her into the house, where the mother standing at the threshold thus welcomes her daughter back, saying,—

Gaṇḍettu, makkettu, mane kaṭṭi sukhavâgi badu-kammâ baduku,

meaning:—May you, my darling, soon receive a husband, bring forth a son, build your own house and live happy.

The mother now gives her a dish containing rice, milk and curds. This is done in the outer house, for the girl is all this time only at the threshold and has not yet entered the inner house. After eating a little of what has been given her by her mother she has to proceed to every house in the village, the oldest female member of which pronounces upon her the same blessing and gives her the same dish to eat. She receives these and pretends to eat a mouthful in every house and then returns home. The mother now stands waiting anxiously her daughter's return. She takes her girl in, and now the pots and other utensils of the family may be touched. This closes this ceremony, the only one that a woman has to undergo before her marriage, and a few days after it is performed the mark which proclaims to the whole Badaga world that the girl is of a marriageable age is put on her forehead. It consists of four different dots, thus:—

It is called technically among them *Haṛil-hâkuleadu*, meaning tatooing the head, but I have not been able to find any one who could explain to me the meaning of these dots. I surmise that they are the end marks of a trident, the favourite weapon of Śiva. As soon as this mark is put upon a girl's forehead it is a caste proclamation, as it were, that any one may claim her hand in marriage, and that the young Badaga in search of a wife may pay a visit to her father's house.

In the Udaya class there is nothing of the nature of courtship, but the father settles the bride or bridegroom for his child. The girl to be married is brought to the village in which the boy chosen

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
AW50 Badaga AW50

778 787 (513) 764 quit the family. Thus a Badaga will never sleep with a light in his house, but before he goes to bed worships it and then carefully extinguishes it. A grand feast is given that night by the agnatic kindred or by a son of the dead person to which all come to eat. Both in the river and in the house the *Linga* is worshipped by the Badagas if they are of the Lingayat class.

The feast closes the first day's funeral rite of the Badagas. The second day's ceremony is a simple affair. It is what is called the pouring of the milk over the grave. On the morning of the second day the eldest mourner of the family starts to the burial place with five measures of the *Koraṭi* grain tied up in his cloth and a big new pot containing milk.

Worship is performed to the stone placed in the middle of the grave and the milk from the new pot is poured over it. The son pours it first and then the others follow him in turn. Each of those assembled there then takes up a handful of the *Koraṭi* grain and pronouncing the words *Avvappane seru*—'Mix yourself with your forefathers'—they cast it over the middle stone all at once. All then march round from south to north and touch the five (302) stones. They then proceed to the river, where, after having been shaved—even their moustaches are removed as an indication of their deep mourning,—they all bathe. They then worship the *Linga* there and return home where the same act of worship is again performed, and this brings to a conclusion the ceremonies of the second day.

The third day is a very important day and the funeral rites of the dead may be said to close with it. At 1 A.M. on that day four plantain leaves, four measures of rice, four measures of bean-seed and four new pots are made ready in the dead man's house. All (415) gather there round a *Kerachi*—a bronze pan used for frying grain, &c. Paddy is poured into this *Kerachi* by the agnatic kindred and by a son of the dead person, while five females, the wife not joining, stir it up with reaping hooks. The *Kerachi* is already placed upon a lighted fire; and while the paddy is thus being turned up the wife mourns outside with loud wailings. A handful of straw from the outside thatch of the house is brought in and lighted up in the hall —*edirmane*. The four new pots, four plantain leaves, &c., are passed over it. Five or three youngsters hold the pots, while the (782) (539) elders utter the following prayer:—

Hâl hechchali hay hechchali